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ART. III.—*Economy of Athens.*

1. *Die Staatshaushaltung der Athener, vier Bücher.* Von AUGUST BOECKH. *Mit einundzwanzig Inschriften.*
2. *The Public Economy of the Athenians. Four Books.* By AUGUSTUS BOECKH. In two volumes. Berlin.

The careful contemplation of antiquity awakens a sentiment of admiration, that so much was accomplished under the imperfect forms of the early republics. Time can never efface the interest which mankind will take in the history of the nation, which first conceived the idea of intrusting the supreme power to the people. The democracy of Athens, with all the imperfections of every part of its public service, with the gross abuses attending its finances, and the reckless corruption which finally turned the elective franchise into a source of personal revenue, yet maintains its dignity in the eyes of the world; for it was there, that the elements of civil liberty were first called into successful and honorable action.

We are not the blind admirers of the Athenian commonwealth. No tongue can adequately praise many of the results of that State; and it would also be difficult fitly to display the deficiencies in its organization, and the gross injustice of its foreign policy. Our own confederacy does not more surpass the Grecian in the extent of territory, over which its liberties are diffused, than it does in the excellence of the details of its laws. The tendency of our institutions is to leave every thing to find its natural level, to throw no obstacles in the way of the free progress of honest industry, to melt all the various classes of society into one mass, to extend the rights of equal citizenship with unqualified liberality, and to break down every thing like a privileged order in the State. The Athenian commonwealth was, on the contrary, eminently artificial in its character; it conceded with a chary hand the advantages of citizenship to the strangers resident on its soil. The franchise of the State was, mainly, an inherited dignity; the government was after all a species of multitudinous aristocracy, where the legislators by birth-right, though numerous, were yet limited, and political power was in truth vested in the hands of a privileged order, which consumed what it did not produce. To this circumstance are to be attributed the greatest abuses in ancient Attica. The self-same principles in human nature, which in England protect the hierarchy and the nobility, pro-

duced in Athens the public festivals at the common cost, and led the multitude to get their living by enacting laws in the assembly, or interpreting them in the halls of judicature.

The student, who attempts to look minutely into the secrets of the classic world, is baffled at every effort. The accounts are almost always imperfect, sometimes contradictory; and the ignorance of the inquirer can often be exchanged only for doubt. He listens to an echo, that comes but faintly from centuries so remote. Though many parts of Grecian history are preserved in the clearest and most graphic sketches, yet the interior of a Grecian State can only be described in its leading features. The picture is exhibited in a dim and wavering light; and can we wonder, that so different views have been taken of it? Is it strange, that the scholar has invested Greece with all the most brilliant colors which imagination can lend? That the glories of Marathon and Platææ have shed a lustre over centuries, when patriotism was nearly extinct, and devotedness to the country had given way to an engrossing selfishness? The mind has been so filled with the sublime productions of Grecian genius in the arts, that attention has been diverted from the consideration of the ordinary concerns of life.

To this cause, may in part be referred the remarkable fact, that while the world is full of books upon ancient Greece, its history, as a whole, has never yet been worthily told. Winckelman has, indeed, in his great work, embodied almost all that can be gleaned, respecting the history of its fine arts; but the history of the literature of Greece remains yet to be written; and the infinite number of volumes, which have been published respecting it, have done no more than furnish materials, which yet remain to be united. May we not say the same of its political history? Men have hitherto made ancient history the vehicle of communicating useful lessons to despots, or inculcating a superficial knowledge of national revolutions upon the young. By far the most elaborate English work on Grecian history, is that of Mitford; but unfortunately Mitford wrote as a partisan. We do not blame him, for exhibiting the Athenian multitude in such attitudes as it had chosen for itself; but we censure him, because he systematically misrepresents the personal characters of its leaders. The heroes and statesmen of the democracy, the favorites of the multitude, are always painted by him in the worst

colors, for which any pretence can be found in the slander of their enemies ; while he is ever ready to invent excuses for the leaders of the aristocracy. There was evil enough at Athens, and truth demands its exposure ; but, after all, virtue is a quality, which belongs to no particular party exclusively ; and we confess, that in reading Mitford, our indignation is often excited, and our wonder also, that the bitterness of party prejudice should still prevail in the delineations of antiquity ; that the fires of the ancient factions, which have been slumbering in the ashes of centuries, should in this distant age blaze up anew under the tread of the historian.

The work of which we purpose to give some account, merits in a high degree the praise of impartiality. Its author was neither dazzled by the splendors, nor deluded by the factions of Attica ; and the contributions which he has made to the stock of knowledge on the subjects, which he has discussed, have been highly valued in Europe. The French already have a translation ; and there is also an English version by a member of Christ Church, Cambridge.

Indeed Mr. Boeckh has displayed immense erudition and care in this elaborate treatise on the Athenian finances. It is one of those works, which best illustrate the peculiar excellence of the Germans in critical researches. There is not a word of vague declamation from beginning to end. No subject is avoided because it is difficult, nor neglected because it is minute. Instead of theories we have a series of facts, selected from the whole circle of classic literature. Almost every author is made to contribute something ; the orators most of all ; and in this way, the author succeeds in throwing light upon many subjects which have hitherto been avoided as impracticable. Nothing seems to have escaped the patient labors of this distinguished Hellenist. Every hint, from which information could be extracted, every passage, from which an inference could be wrung, is made the subject of consideration ; and in this way, a vast deal of information is collected, illustrating the ordinary concerns of business in the best days of Athens.

Yet with all Mr. Boeckh's assiduous industry, we cannot conceal, that his researches have often been baffled by the want of sufficient exact *data*. He has done all that was possible ; but to represent life, as it was in the best days of the city of Minerva, imagination has yet to fill up many an outline ; and the jests of the comic writers, and the anecdotes of the lovers

of marvels, though fruitful sources of inference, tempt curiosity without fully satisfying it.

A reference to Attica, recalls all our classic associations. Attention is at once directed

‘Where on the *Ægean* shore a city stands,
Built nobly ; pure the air, and light the soil ;
Athens, the eye of Greece, mother of arts
And eloquence.’

It would seem to us, as if there the passion for gain had been lost in the strife for glory ; as though no avarice but that of praise had been there domesticated. Who asks, out of what fund the Parthenon was built ? Who inquires into the cost of its sculptures ? Who is curious to know the income of Socrates, and at what rates of interest his little patrimony may have been lent ? Who demands, if the Athenians too had a tariff ? Who wishes to ascertain how much would have constituted an independent fortune in the days of Lycurgus, the Athenian financier ?

And yet in Athens, as in Boston, commerce was active, and manufactures not neglected ; houses were built to let ; and though there were no joint-stock companies, yet insurance was not unknown ; and though there were no banks of circulation, yet money-lenders abounded. Following the guidance of Boeckh, we intend to enter into some homely statements respecting life and business at Athens. Our inquiries are not now into the eloquence of Demosthenes or the bravery of Phocion ; neither into the productions of the Grecian fine arts, nor the monuments of Grecian intelligence. We enter rather upon such minute inquiries, as can neither bridle the imagination, nor refine the taste, but may yet throw some light on an important chapter in the history of the human race. Contentment with our own political condition will certainly be increased by a near contemplation of the condition of the free States of antiquity.

Financial skill is reckoned among the moderns as a great and necessary accomplishment in a statesman ; and the science of political economy has swallowed up almost every thing besides. The ancients did not make of it a separate science. Their treatises upon politics touch upon it but incidentally ; and therefore information respecting the condition of ancient finances must be gathered piecemeal, and by inductions. Little direct information has been preserved.

The resources of Athens in its earlier days can scarcely merit attention ; and after the loss of its independence, the inquiry would be less productive of interest or profitable instruction. Our views will chiefly have reference to the time following the Persian wars, and before the aggrandizement of Alexander.

Silver and gold furnish the criterion, by which the price of commodities is estimated. Previously to entering upon any details, it is desirable to form some idea of the abundance of the precious metals in Greece.

In the early period of Grecian history, the quantity of the precious metals increased but slowly. But between the age of Solon and Demosthenes, such a change was wrought, and the value of money had diminished so much, that prices were affected in proportion of one to five ; a change, rapid beyond any thing in modern history.

The amount of the circulating medium of Greece increased with her connection with the East. Gold was rare in the earlier periods ; and in the days of Cræsus, could hardly be purchased anywhere in Hellas. It was more abundant in Africa and in Asia. Who has not heard of the golden sands of Colchis, and the glittering streams of Pactolus ? Who remains ignorant of the fables respecting Midas, and the amiable liberality as well as the hoarded treasures of Cræsus ? The master of Celænæ, a town near the sources of the Mæander, himself possessed about fifteen millions of dollars in gold. The booty of Cyrus in Asia Minor, was incalculably great. The revenues of Darius, after defraying all the expenses of the provinces and their satraps, amounted annually to \$12,191,400. India was ever famous for its wealth in valuable ores ; and the story of the busy ants, that dug for gold, is but an allegory, that proves the productiveness of her mines.

The circulating medium did not increase in proportion with the quantity of bullion. The royal treasury was filled with massive bars ; the temples and the public coffers were provided by a prudent superstition or the grasping nature of despotism with immense treasures in the precious metals, either unwrought or formed into splendid works of art. The coinage was limited by the sums, which the habit of commerce seemed to require for its purposes. Even in Greece immense sums lay in deposite. The citadel of Athens had a strong box with 87,300 dollars in cash, besides many vessels of silver and gold. The treasures of Delphi are notorious.

Every one has heard of the pious offerings of Cræsus. The rapacity of a later age could withstand the temptation no longer ; and when the hands of sacrilege were laid upon the treasures of Delphi, the offerings of Cræsus alone yielded \$3,600,000.

The Persian king entered on the invasion of Greece with one thousand two hundred camels laden with money and precious things. These of course became the prey of the victors. The Phocians, as we have already hinted, seized on the wealth of Delphi, and coined from it \$9,000,000.

The amount of the currency of Greece received further additions from the system of bribery practised by Philip ; but after the conquest of Asia by Alexander, coin flowed in upon Europe in still broader channels. The treasures which he found collected in the Persian empire were very considerable. The amount taken at Susa and Persis was \$45,000,000, at Pasargada \$5,400,000, and at Persepolis \$108,000,000. The whole sum collected at Ecbatana, is said by Strabo, no contemptible authority, to have amounted to \$162,000,000.

Alexander's liberality corresponded with this immense wealth. The expenses of his table were \$1,500 daily ; and he paid the debts of his soldiers, amounting to about \$8,883,000. The funeral ceremonies of Hephæstion are said to have cost \$10,800,000. The grateful monarch deemed \$720,000 no unreasonable appropriation to further the investigations of Aristotle in Natural History ; and it was an offer of \$900,000, which Phocion refused. His yearly revenue from Asia was \$27,000,000 ; and he left a treasure of no more than \$45,000,000.

His satraps must have been very rich. Harpalus, who fled to Athens, was estimated to have amassed \$4,500,000, though he declared in Greece, that he had but \$674,000.

The wealth of the successors of Alexander was equally extraordinary. A single festival of the Ptolemies cost \$2,000,000 ; and, at the lowest computation, the treasure left by Ptolemy Philadelphus amounted to the enormous sum of \$166,000,000. Some estimate it four times as high. It is difficult to believe the account, but not impossible. Egypt was at that time the richest country in the world ; and had almost a monopoly of the commerce with the East. Nor is it half so strange, as that the debt of a modern nation should have reached the immense sum of four thousand millions of dollars. The revenue from the customs in Egypt was \$13,000,000 annually. The

annual taxes in Cœlo-Syria, Phenicia, Judea, and Samaria, were farmed out for more than \$14,000,000.

These general statements* tend to show, that the precious metals existed in very great abundance in the Levant. It is to be remembered, however, that the custom of collecting great masses of these treasures, tended to prevent the proportionate increase of the circulating medium. So many temples, so many cities, so many provincial satraps, so many despotic princes withdrew the coin from circulation to hoard it in deposits, that prices were not reduced in the degree, which we might have inferred from the mention of such enormous sums. Great quantities also existed in the shape of works of art; and the shrines of many a Grecian Deity were adorned with images and costly vessels wrought out of 'barbaric gold.'

The amount of the coinage of Athens has been variously estimated. The basis of calculation is the weight of such pieces of money as have been preserved. We find that as near an approximation as we can make, gives fifteen cents for the *drachma*, and of course for the *mina* \$15, and \$900 for the *talent*. This is the basis, which we follow. It is a little more than the one usually given in the English school-books; yet a little less than the calculations of Barthelemy would authorize. An *obolus* is of course taken to be two cents and a half.

The Greeks reckoned according to *drachmas*; as the French according to *francs*. The usual idea has been, as to the difference between ancient and modern prices, that one dollar was worth in the best days of Athens what ten dollars are now. Boeckh makes the difference no greater than as one to three. We confess, we think that he has not reduced it unreasonably. If prices at modern Athens or at Naples are compared with the statement, which we shall presently give, the view of our Hellenist will probably be confirmed.

The Athenian coinage, to which we have alluded, was the one established by Solon. Before his time the *drachma* was worth more. Out of seventy-two and a half *drachmas* of the old coin, he made one hundred. In this change, creditors as well as debtors acquiesced. By the way, Solon was the first, who

* In the West, the silver mines near Carthagera in Spain employed forty thousand hands, in mining and smelting, and yielded about \$2,625 daily. Lusitania and the Asturias yielded 20,000 pounds of gold annually in good years. The gold mines of Dalmatia, in the time of Nero, produced fifty pounds daily.

proposed the abolition of imprisonment for debt. He carried the measure too. Many years passed, before the same improvement was introduced in the Roman State. At length the Roman legislation also was reformed. Our modern codes have long retained a feature, wholly at variance with the justice and philanthropy, which ought to be the basis of popular institutions. It would seem, that all the lessons, which may be learned of the ancient commonwealth, have not yet been exhausted.

The value of gold is more liable to change than that of silver. Its ancient worth, as compared with silver, varied with times and places. The relative value was usually considered to be as ten to one. This proportion is surprisingly low; and other more exact statements are given. In the time of Plato, gold, compared with silver, was as twelve to one; Herodotus says as thirteen to one. In the Bosphorus, in the age of Demosthenes it was as fourteen to one. Among the Romans, in the year 564 of Rome, that is, 190 years before Christ, one third of a sum of money paid by the Ætolians was taken in gold, at the rate of one for ten, to the grievance of the Ætolians. Under Cæsar, the gold from Gaul reduced the rate to one eight and thirteen-fourteenths; while in the fifth century of the Christian era, it was as high as one to eighteen.

The price of gold advanced in Greece with the progress of business. It was much used in making remittances. Soldiers were paid in it; and Sparta hoarded vast sums of gold, never to be expended but for warlike purposes.

Gold coin was early in use. Cræsus coined the golden *stater*. Darius, the son of Hystaspis, coined *darics* of pure gold, equal in weight to thirty cents in silver, and current for three dollars. Five therefore made a *mina*; three hundred a *talent*. The golden *darics* were favorite coins in Hellas.

Some of the Grecian States had a debased coinage for domestic circulation. Even the Athenians once engaged in that unholy process, but it was soon put down by public opinion; and the coin of Athens maintained in commerce its high character for intrinsic value.

The nearest approximation we have been able to make to the square contents of Attica, would allow to that country, including Salamis and Helena, no more than from 640 to 656 square geographical miles. The ancients called Athens the most populous city of Greece; it is interesting to inquire what was the number of the inhabitants of the district.

The population was composed of three separate classes ; citizens, resident strangers, and slaves. Of the former, the average number was 20,000 ; who had the franchise of citizens. Allowing the proportion of $4\frac{1}{2}$ to include the women and minors, we shall have 90,000 as the number of the free population of Attica. A similar mode of calculation gives 45,000 for the number of free strangers, whom business or pleasure had domiciliated at Athens. The census taken by Demetrius gives 400,000 slaves. As we can aim only at an approximation, and as the round number shows a want of strict exactness, we may call the number of slaves 365,000. Thus 90,000 citizens, 45,000 sojourners, and 365,000 slaves, in all 500,000 souls, occupied the soil of Attica.

The free population was to the slave about as one to four. And in this fact we have the key to the very singular phenomena exhibited in Athenian history. The public affairs of Athens were managed by the majority of the citizens. The aristocracy became at last very unwilling to appear in the popular assemblies, and were voted down whenever they did appear. In this way, some six or eight thousand very poor men came to exercise the control over Athenian affairs. Masters of the public treasury and of the power of levying taxes, they voted to themselves what sums they could ; till at last every poor citizen made politics his trade ; and deemed it but fair to be compensated for participating in legislation. As there was no representation, and business was conducted as in our town meetings, the plausible idea of paying for legislation opened the way to a support for every citizen ; the rich naturally declined the service, and made no claim to the emoluments. The poor citizens, though very numerous, yet still a limited number in comparison with the whole population of Athens, obtained a monopoly of the legislation and its wages. There is nothing like this in the annals of any other country.

The great disproportion between the free and the slave population in Attica is surprising ; but is corroborated by circumstantial as well as direct evidence. Every body was served by slaves in Attica ; even the poorer citizens owned some miserable drudge. The manufactories were supplied by them ; the rich had throngs of attendants ; even some philosophers were not content with less than ten. The father of Demosthenes employed more than fifty in his business, besides

the female slaves of his house. Plato says expressly, that rich men often had fifty slaves.

It was this immense number of slaves, which left the free citizens of Attica no possible occupation but politics. They were literally crowded out of every other pursuit. Thus the Athenians lived either on the revenues derived from their possessions, or by serving in the courts and popular assemblies, or by pursuing some of those noble arts, by which genius was exercised, and the popular pride cultivated and gratified.

But how were these 500,000 souls distributed over the soil of Attica? Athens had 10,000 houses. Fourteen souls to a house would seem too large an allowance; and yet many of the houses were built on purpose to be occupied by several families. The mining district was also very populous. The harbor of the Piræus was likewise crowded with tenements. Allow then for the mining district 20,000, for the city 140,000, for the harbor 40,000, and we shall have left for the country 300,000 souls; or about 500 to the square geographical mile. The number seems incredibly large; it is still more difficult to disbelieve the estimate. We must remember, that Attica was the head of a number of States, the mistress of the sea, and the territory in which wealth, manufactures and business were concentrated.

The soil of Attica was not unproductive. The mild climate ripened all excellent fruits; the arts of agriculture were greatly advanced; the oil of Attica is famous even to this day; and its classic hills, of which every peak has been the favorite haunt of a God, or the chosen theme of a poet, are still crowned with the circling rows of olives;

‘And still his honied wealth Hymettus yields.’

Attica did not abound in horses. At the battle of Marathon there was no cavalry. The fisheries were good; the mines of silver productive; the quarries of marble, which the poet describes as still gleaming in the glare of the long days of summer, were even then so highly esteemed as to constitute an important article of export.

The mechanic arts were originally in low repute. None of the ancient nobility were willing to engage in them; but the mechanics afterwards often gained great power in the commonwealth, and Cleon the tanner was among the favored successors of Pericles. Yet manufactures were liberally encouraged. The greatest freedom of competition was permitted;

strangers thronged to Attica to engage in business, and their industry at length furnished a large amount of exports. Prices were kept up by the great foreign demand, and the high rates of interest exacted by the capitalist rendered large profits necessary. Arms, various kinds of cutlery, lamps and cloths were largely exported.

Attica was thus enabled to procure from abroad the products, which her own soil could not furnish in sufficient abundance. There was no law to prohibit the exportation of specie. On the contrary, the exceeding purity of the Attic coinage made it often useful; the want of bills of exchange frequently made it necessary. The harbor of Athens was doubtless very much such a busy place as the harbor of New-York. In the Piræus, as in the harbor of our own splendid commercial emporium, the produce of every clime was to be found. The dominion of the sea, says Xenophon, secured to the Athenians the sweets of the world. Nor would the Athenian ships in point of size have suffered from a comparison with the New-York packets. Demosthenes speaks of one, which carried three hundred men, besides its cargo, slaves, and complement of sailors.

That honorable employment, which has such an absorbing charm to the lovers of intelligence, that trade, which is emphatically **THE TRADE**, did not flourish in the days of yore in the city of Minerva; and a *good* book was a thing utterly unknown to those who wept over the sad story of Thucydides, or exulted in the narrative of the Father of History. There was indeed a book-maker in Athens; and books were exported even across the Euxine; but they were chiefly *blank books*; the day of glory did not dawn on the trade, till the reign of Augustus. The sale of books for profit was so uncommon in the days of Plato, that Hermodorus, the oldest bookseller of whom we read, and who sold the writings of Plato in Sicily, came to be a proverb. In the youth of Zeno, however, there were some incipient establishments for the sale of books in Athens.

The credit system, so important in modern commerce, was but partially understood by the ancients. Hence there were none of those commotions and pressures in the money-market, to which our cities are exposed. Yet there were some houses, which could always find money. The endorser was bound for a year. The laws for collecting debts were very rigid; and

the rights of capitalists were guarded with great strictness. The rich were taxed, and taxed heavily ; but they were well protected. There was one class of frauds on the creditor, in which the deception was punished with death. When money was lent, and the proceeds of a voyage pledged as collateral security, if the debtor secretly disposed of them, to the injury of his creditor, life was forfeited.

Commerce was suspended, or was at least inactive in the winter season. That, therefore, was the time for the sessions of the court, which had maritime jurisdiction. If a cause was not brought to an issue, it lay over to the next winter. But at a later time, the law assigned a month as the period, within which an action was required to be decided.

Commercial agents or consuls were not unknown. The Athenians hardly had a systematized tariff ; or rather their position was such, as to render the adoption of a protecting system wholly useless. The chief commercial regulations related to the importation of corn ; of which great supplies were annually required from abroad. There also occurred cases, where the sale of a monopoly was made an expedient for obtaining revenue. But if Athens had no prohibitory duties, because the first manufacturing district could defy competition, it was not so with her neighbors. Ægina and Argos both became jealous of the wealth of Athens, and the introduction of Attic manufactures was prohibited by their laws.

The dominion of the sea was converted by Athens into a commercial despotism. She understood too, no less than modern England, the dismal doctrines of blockade ; and submission was almost the only security for a commercial city. If a ship hoisted an independent flag, it was sure to be pillaged by the Athenian corsairs. Her maritime courts were as ready as the English to sustain the claim of the privateer ; and it was equally difficult to get a decree reversed, after a ship had been once condemned.

In the domestic market, the retail-trade was open to all citizens ; foreigners might also come into competition ; though of them a tax, or caution-money, was exacted.

The gains of mercantile operations were far greater than at present. Thirty per cent. was an ordinary rate of interest, where the collateral security was the return cargo ; and where a charge of insurance was of course included. Yet it was unusual for a ship to return with its capital doubled ; a re-

sult not at all uncommon in the early stages of our own national republic. A Samian ship, which made for its owners a gain of \$54,000 in one voyage, was considered by Herodotus something so extraordinary, that he has embalmed the memory of it in his works.

The productiveness of the southern regions and the difficulty attending the exports to remote nations, operated to reduce the price of many articles of easy production. Wine, for example, was produced in profusion in the southern countries generally; and its use was chiefly confined to the South. Prices were of course low. In upper Italy, in seasons of plenty, a bushel of wheat may have been worth ten cents; while a gallon of wine cost less than one. But Athens was a city, in which living was regarded as expensive. We shall give some *data* by which this opinion is confirmed. But the low price of some articles, as compared with present prices, is often to be attributed to a change in the state of the markets, and not to a change in the value of money merely.

The nearest possible approximation gives thirty dollars as the average price of an acre of good land in Attica. In this computation, we allow four *plethra* to the acre; which nearly accords with the fact. Yet landed estates were small and were greatly subdivided. Alcibiades inherited no more than seventy acres; and Phænippus, who owned three hundred and sixty acres, was esteemed an immense land-holder.

There were in Athens more than 10,000 houses; yet in consequence of the great extent of the city, all the land was not occupied. The houses were unsightly; the streets narrow and crooked; and the Piræus was the only regularly built part of the city. The upper stories often overhung the street; and stair-cases were very generally on the outside. Private houses were often built of unburnt brick. The whole expense of building was inconsiderable. The prices of houses varied from forty-five to one thousand eight hundred dollars, according to their size, situation, and quality. The latter price was unusually high; half the sum would purchase a very decent dwelling-house.

An able-bodied slave, not possessed of any peculiar skill, was worth not far from twenty dollars. The price varied of course, according to his health and age; the variation was from seven to thirty dollars. This proves how absurd, to say nothing of its immorality, is the use of slave-labor in

a temperate clime. The labor of the slave would, as the price proves, do but little more than yield his own support. Yet a good mechanic was worth much more. The better slaves, employed by the father of Demosthenes in the manufacture of swords, were worth on an average about seventy-five dollars; and that sum was no unusual price for a skilful workman. The dividends on the establishment of Demosthenes, amounted to a little less than sixteen per cent. annually; but another branch of his business yielded him an annual profit of thirty per cent.

A good, serviceable horse, was worth about forty-five dollars; but a handsome saddle, or carriage horse, would very readily command one hundred and eighty dollars. Yet who can set a limit to luxury in horses? It may be said of human nature, as of youth, *gaudet equis*. Bucephalus brought nearly twelve thousand dollars. The price of a pair of mules was from eighty to a hundred and twenty dollars. In the good days of the admirable Solon, before the precious metals were plenty, the pious devotee could purchase an ox for the altar at the moderate price of seventy-five cents. But when Athens had grown rich, the price of the best beeves varied from seven and a half to eleven and a half dollars. A hecatomb cost in one instance, seven hundred and sixty-seven dollars; in another, eleven thousand and fifty-eight dollars. It is mentioned as one of the expensive fooleries of Alcibiades, that he gave one thousand and fifty dollars for a dog.

But corn and the corn laws—these involve a great question in the politics of Athens. Attica was by no means able to supply its own demands for domestic consumption. The residue was received partly from the Thracian Chersonesus, partly from Pontus. Hence we see, how important was the possession of Byzantium to Athens. There is reason to believe, that the annual importation of bread-stuffs equalled one and a half million of bushels.* Mr. Boeckh thinks, that the

* The inquiry into the corn trade requires an exact idea of the capacity of the Attic *medimnus*. The uninitiated may think it very easy to ascertain this. We consulted Donnegan's Greek Lexicon; we would not believe our eyes, as we read that it was equal to twelve bushels. To twelve bushels! We might here indulge in a little triumph at detecting so egregious an error; but in our charity we believe it to be a misprint for gallons. In Pickering's Lexicon, the *medimnus* is said to be equal to five pecks. It is nearer six. In the text we have allowed

soil of Attica was made to produce three million bushels besides. This we doubt. It is certainly stated in the authorities, that a quart measure of wheat daily, say twelve bushels annually, was the allowance of a slave. Suppose there were three hundred and sixty-five thousand slaves; let us deduct twenty-five thousand for children, and we shall have four million two hundred and eighty thousand bushels for the use of the slaves only. The basis of the computation is according to ancient authorities; but the quantity seems to us much too considerable. It is not probable, that every slave was so well provided, or that the women received always an equal quantity with the men.

Be that as it may; the soil of Attica was made to produce a great deal, and yet vast quantities were still needed from abroad. No corn was allowed to be exported; no ship laden with it could touch at an Attic port, without selling at least two-thirds of its corn. The laws threw hindrances in the way of buying up all that was in the market; the quantity which might be purchased at once was limited, and the retailer was restricted to a profit of less than two cents on a bushel. All attempts to forestall and monopolize were prohibited, under the penalty of death. Yet the oppression of the corn merchants was very great, in spite of the severity of the laws.

As to prices—under Solon a bushel of wheat was worth ten cents; from 390 to 380 years before Christ, about thirty cents; in the age of Demosthenes, half a dollar was esteemed a moderate demand.

The bakers of Athens carried their art to a high degree of perfection; but we have no direct criterion to decide on the prices, which the good house-keepers of classic name were obliged to pay. The price of corn furnishes some means of judging; the disproportion, however, between the price of wheat and of bread must have been greater than at present, in consequence of the high rates of interest.

one and a half bushels for a *medimnus*. The English bushel contains 2150 2-5 cubic inches; the *medimnus* contains 3150 5926-100,000 cubic inches. Having alluded to Pickering's Greek and English Lexicon, we take this occasion to say, that in the new edition, the American scholar, relying manfully and properly on his own researches, has made many valuable additions, many judicious omissions, and many well-founded alterations in Schrevelius. In its new form, it is the most convenient and trust-worthy Greek and English Lexicon for schools.

The *metretes* of wine held about thirty-five quarts, or, (we pique ourselves on exactness) 35 1452-10,000 quarts. The low price of wine in the ancient world is astonishing. Native wine of Attica sold for less than two cents a quart; and very tolerable wine was often sold for half that sum. This low price proves, also, that in the main the Athenians were not an intemperate race. The Chian wine was worth forty-five cents a quart.

Sweet oil was worth a little more than sixty cents a gallon. Salt was easily imported into Athens; it was also manufactured. Of its price nothing is known. Timber for building was imported; but coals and fire-wood were sent into the city on asses. The quantity, which an ass would carry, was worth thirty cents.

The cost of living was as unequal as were the degrees of wealth and extravagance. Alexander's table cost for himself and his suite \$1,500 daily, and the miser in Theophrastus allowed his wife but nine mills. The term *opson* embraced every thing but bread; and seven or eight cents were considered a small provision for it. Yet a slave in Terence buys a meal for his old master for two and a half cents; and the lawyer Lysias complains of the guardian, who charged for the *opson* of two boys and a little girl, the extravagant sum of a New-York shilling. The Athenians were very fond of fish; and a great deal of salt-fish was imported from Pontus and even from Cadiz.

The ancient world was ruled by the same human nature as the modern. The Wellington boots of modern days remind us of the Alcibiades boots, and the Iphicrates shoes of antiquity. A good cloak might cost one dollar and eighty cents; and a dandy was willing to give three dollars for a coat; evidently, however, from a fashionable tailor. A good pair of woman's shoes cost no more than thirty cents. A very showy pair of men's shoes may have cost one dollar and twenty cents. Ointments were exceedingly expensive. The more precious kinds were sold for from fifty dollars to one hundred dollars for a gill.

There are no sufficient data, on which to estimate the cost of a ship. As to productiveness, we find that the corn ship, Isis, of immense burden, yielded annually for freight, \$10,800.

The amount necessary for the maintenance of a family, is not easily established. Socrates is supposed to have lived upon an income of seventy-five dollars; but then, his manner of living

was inferior to that of the slaves. His coat was old and shabby, and he wore the same garment both winter and summer; he went barefoot; his chief food was bread and water; and as he engaged in no kind of business to mend his estate or increase his income, it is not wonderful that his wife scolded often. Demosthenes, his sister, and their mother, paid for their board \$105 for a year; and paid the house rent, or rather provided the house into the bargain. A young man, Mantitheus, could be educated and supported, for \$108 annually. The accounts furnish no means of arriving at a definite decision. Who would limit at the present day the sum, with which it would be possible to preserve life?

Death brought heavy expenses in its train. A piety, more disinterested than wise, lavished the income of years upon the expenses of a funeral; which amounted to a sum varying from \$15 to \$1800.

The working classes received but moderate compensation. The great number of slaves, who came into competition for labor, reduced the price exceedingly. Mere manual labor could be procured for ten cents a day; that seems to have been the lowest rate, and is not lower than the present price of labor in many parts of Europe.

The fares in travelling were very small. From Ægina to the Piræus, a distance of sixteen miles, the fare was but five cents. From Egypt or Pontus, not more than thirty cents. This price is inexplicably low. A soldier in the infantry received for pay and rations for himself and attendant, thirty cents daily; the officers twice, and the generals only four times as much. Here is a great contrast with modern usage. The wages of the highest officer, equal only to four times the wages of the private! What would our major-generals say to this?

Physicians were sometimes appointed by the State for the public. Hippocrates is said to have received a stipend from Athens, and to have been physician to the State. Democedes in the 60th Olympiad, about 538 years before Christ, received at Ægina \$900. He was invited to Athens with a salary of \$1,500; but Polycrates of Samos secured him for \$1,800. In those days money was still scarce.

The *stars* at the theatres received enormous compensation. The highest sum mentioned, is \$900 for two days; which would satisfy our most popular players.

Protagoras, the Abderite, began teaching for money. He demanded for a complete course, \$1,500. Gorgias demanded as much, yet died poor. Some, finding the prices high, used to cheapen the wisdom of the philosopher ; just as now, copy-rights are a subject of discussion. But competition reduced prices. Evenus demanded only \$150, in the age of Socrates ; and at the same price, Isocrates taught the whole art of rhetoric. Prodicus used to sell tickets for separate lectures.

One per cent. a month, was the usual rate of interest ; yet there was no legal restriction of usury. The trade in money, like every thing else, was left wholly free, and the rates varied from ten to thirty-six per cent. In cases of bottomry, this last rate was the highest. It is plain, that insurance was in such cases paid for, not less than the use of capital. The high rates may be ascribed to the insecurity of the times ; the imperfect developement of sound legislation ; the difficulty of pursuing a claim in a foreign State ; and the faulty administration of justice.

The brokers made their gain partly by exchanging coins at a premium, but far more by receiving deposits and lending them again at a higher rate than they themselves agreed to pay. The credit of some of them became very great ; and money and notes of hand were frequently deposited with them. Pasion, at once a banker and a broker, used to make a clear profit of \$1,500 annually. Bankruptcies among the brokers, were of course, not unknown.

Imprisonment for debt was not allowed. The code of Solon, as we have stated above, five hundred years before Christ, terminated at Athens that mortgaging of the body, which has so long deformed the codes of modern States.

It seems doubtful, whether investments in real estate were profitable ones. In the cases of which accounts are preserved, the returns seem hardly to have exceeded eight or nine per cent. Yet the number of those, who lived in hired houses, was very great, hardly less than 45,000, with a proportionate number of slaves.

Before the present movement in the civilized world in favor of constitutional liberty, modern revolutions were usually the result of financial difficulties. In a democracy, there can be no distinction between the interests of the government and the people ; we, therefore, find the civil commotions in the ancient States to have resulted from these causes. Money was as

highly valued and the expenses of Athens were proportionally as great, as those of modern governments; but the ancients had no public debt, and therefore no tendency to bankruptcy. They were often in distress for funds; but violent remedies were applied; and the oppression did not remain as a permanent and increasing burden on succeeding generations.

After the system of oppressing the allies was well understood at Athens, money became the chief lever in public affairs; and of course the decline of the State was at hand. Yet pride of character, ambition, and the hope of plunder after victory, still preserved the spirit of liberty in the nation. The true policy of a popular State should be, to diminish the public expenses; in Athens, on the contrary, to the great detriment of the people, new wants were continually invented; new sources of prodigal expenditure were devised; and of course the finances kept constantly increasing in importance.

A regular estimate of the public revenue and expenditure seems never to have been made in Athens. Such annual estimates seem not to have been usual in antiquity. The regular expenses of Athens were for public buildings, public festivals, distributions and wages to the people for legislative and judicial services, pay of the troops, poor rates, public rewards, purchases of arms, ships and cavalry horses. The extraordinary expenses in wars cannot be estimated.

The public buildings of Athens were, as all the world knows, numerous, costly, and splendid. The most opulent monarchs, the haughtiest princes, have not been able to surpass or to equal, what the energies of the Athenian multitude called into existence. The Romans could do no more than imitate; and when quite recently Prussia desired, that the principal entrance into its royal city might be worthy of the pride of a rising power, its artists could propose nothing better than to reproduce the Propylæa of Athens. The dockyard of Athens alone cost \$900,000. The fortifications were on a gigantic scale. The city and its harbors were protected by walls sixty feet five inches high, and broad enough for two wagons to pass conveniently; of faced stone, bound by iron bolts. The city and the harbor were connected by walls, one side of which measured more than four and a half, the other nearly four, miles. These were of course originally very expensive, and constantly required large expenditures for repairs. The Propylæa cost five years' labor, and \$1,810,800 in money. Add to these the Odeon,

the hippodromes, the aqueducts, the fountains, the public baths, the ornaments of the citadel, the temples of victory, of Neptune, of Minerva, all adorned with the costliest works of art, the pavements of the streets, the public road to Eleusis, the numerous altars, which pious superstition prodigally erected and endowed; and it will be evident, that a State of but half a million souls must have practised personal self-denial for the sake of public display. Time and the violence of man have indeed swept away most of these monuments of the inventive genius of Greece, these visible representations of the power, piety, taste, and luxury of the Attic democracy. Yet the ruins, which remain, are the admiration of all beholders. A few weather beaten-statues, a few mangled and broken bas-reliefs, torn from Athens by the rapacity of a British nobleman, now constitute the chief wealth in sculpture, which the British empire contains. Let two thousand years of adversity pass over the decline of London, and what monuments would survive to tell the future inquirers, that it had been the wealthiest metropolis of this age, and had claimed the first rank also for intelligence as well as for thrift? The private warehouses of London are the admiration of the observer; but except St. Paul's (which, after all, has not the stamp of eternity upon it like the Parthenon,) and the Waterloo bridge, there is nothing, which would bid defiance to time, and bear testimony to the latest generation, of the grandeur of British power. The chief city of the little democracy of Attica contained within its precincts far more of those manifestations of human ability, which elevate the soul above the ordinary details of life, stimulate the imagination, and quicken the creative faculties.

The police of Athens seems to have been limited to a patrol of armed watchmen, whose duty it was to preserve the tranquillity of the streets, and to afford protection to persons and property.

The festivals were a great source of extravagance. The Athenians, in the early days of the republic, sacrificed liberally, to display their reverence for the gods; afterwards prodigally, that the people might riot on the offerings of religion. In the splendor and in the number of her festivals, Athens surpassed all other Grecian States. The poets were invited to produce their magnificent dramas; tragedy was evoked with its splendid pall and its recollections of the days of demigods; the youthful beauty of the city appeared in the choirs; music

lent its attractions to heighten the vivid interest of the stage ; and splendid processions, with their glittering pageantry and solemn train, assisted in filling up a holiday with spectacles, that might attract and astonish the rest of Greece. 'You never postpone your festivals,' says Demosthenes, 'and you lavish on them larger sums than you expend for the naval service ; but your fleets always arrive too late.' 'Count the cost of their tragedies,' says Plutarch, 'you will find that their *Œdipuses* and *Antigones*, and *Medeas*, and *Electras*, cost more than their wars for supremacy with the other Greeks, and their struggles for freedom against the barbarians.'

But a still greater abuse consisted in the direct distribution of money to the people. The money, levied from the allies, was divided among the poorer citizens, whole talents at a time. Confiscated estates were their plunder. The poor helped themselves out of the public chest, and sometimes dined and always went to the theatres at the cost of the State. Strange system of political ethics ! where a ticket for the play was made a public concern.

We pay our legislators, courts, and justices ; the ancient Athenians went further ; they paid themselves for attending the town meetings. The whole number of voters may have been 20,000, but the rich and the busy did not usually make their appearance ; the poor citizens never failed. Seven and a half cents was the liberal compensation, which an Athenian citizen received for acting in the supreme legislature of the State. We have reason to suppose, that 8,000 usually attended. Suppose 8,000 at seven and a half cents a piece ; and we see that each Athenian town-meeting cost the State \$600. There were forty regular meetings in the year ; the annual charge was therefore \$24,000. The daily and the annual cost of our representative General Court, is far greater than that of the general sessions of Attica.

The Council of Five Hundred, were paid fifteen cents each a day, for every day of actual service. We see in this, the views of the Athenians in regard to the compensation of public officers. They paid them but little more than the wages of a laborer. The relative value of money we have stated to be as three to one. Our House of Representatives would be as well paid as the Athenian senate, if their pay were fixed at forty-five cents a day. This may appear strange ; but it is in conformity with the Grecian policy. The commander-in-chief of

an army received, as we have seen, but four times the wages of a private. High salaries are not at all classic.

Athens was the great shire-town, in which all the courts of Attica were held, and where the causes of the allies also were tried. There was more law business done at Athens, than in all Greece besides. Nearly one third of the whole number of citizens sat daily,* as judges. Hence it was, that Athens swarmed with half-bred lawyers, pettifoggers, quarrelsome, litigious sophists. The daily pay of a judge was seven and a half cents. Every one, on entering, received a ticket and a judge's staff. When the day's work was done, he returned the ticket and received his emolument. There were ten courts, each composed of five hundred, and one regularly in session. Mention is also made of larger courts, composed of ten, fifteen, and even twenty hundred. Allowing 6,000 as the average daily number of judges in Athens, it is plain, that the title must have been more common than it is even in Vermont, and must have cost the State \$135,000 annually.

The public orators, advocates, and lawyers, employed by the people, were ten in number. Their pay, like that of the senators, was fifteen cents for each day's service. Ambassadors were paid with equal frugality; though permanent embassies were unknown. Poets even received a public stipend. No person could draw double pay for different service; as, for example, no one could claim a compensation as present at the town meeting, and as judge, or orator, or senator, on the same day. The travelling expenses of the embassies were also publicly defrayed.

In spite of the doctrines which Mr. Malthus attempts to deduce from the conditions of mortal being, the weak, the unfortunate, all those incapable of earning a living, were sustained by the eleemosynary munificence of the State. In this exercise of public philanthropy, the Athenians were not imitated by the other Greeks; to them exclusively belongs the honor of providing for the poor, the helpless, and the aged, at the common charge. The Athenian State also supported and educated the children of those who fell in battle. Those who were crippled in war received a pension. Pisistratus established a military hospital. As to the provision for the poor, none could receive the benefit of it, except they had less than forty-five

*That is, except on such days as were appropriated to religion or to general assemblies.

dollars. Yet this restriction was liberally interpreted. The assistance which was afforded, varied from two and a half to five cents daily.

Public rewards and honors formed a small charge upon the State. Golden crowns were sometimes awarded, or public statues erected. The dowry paid to each of the daughters of Aristides, amounted to more than \$450.

That the Athenians were at considerable expense in times of peace to collect warlike stores, is in itself evident. But into these discussions, as well as the charges of war, we cannot enter. The revenue of Athens, in its days of prosperity, was \$1,800,000 ; a large income for so small a State, and which could not have been collected, except by the consent of the allies to oppression.

The statements, which we have already given, are derived chiefly from the two first books of the work, of which the title is prefixed to this article. In the third book, Mr. Boeckh proceeds to investigate with great minuteness the sources of the Athenian revenue. His work transcends every thing, which has hitherto been written on the subject. The fourth book is devoted to a discussion of the extraordinary income of the Athenian State, and to the special financial regulations of the Greeks. If we cannot write *most eloquent*, or *most beautiful* under every page, we may at least pronounce them most minute, most exact, most elaborately and unaffectedly learned. We have seen in a foreign journal, the objection, that Mr. Boeckh descends into the consideration of too small and particular circumstances. A most strange objection ! It is this circumstantial exactness, which must ever be the despair of vain declaimers, and the envy of superficial scholars. In his particularity consists his chief merit, and the trust-worthiness of his general inferences.

On the whole, we cannot but feel a strong partiality for the Athenian democracy. It was very far removed from that perfect liberty, which is enjoyed in our confederacy ; the democracy of Vermont, for example, is an incomparably fuller practical developement of the principle of civil equality. Citizenship in Athens was an inheritance, and the government was in the hands of a minority ; yet it was the nearest approximation to a perfectly popular State, of which ancient history furnishes the example. Our own revolution formed a new era in political history ; and however we may regret the arts of

Greece, and the general thirst for glory, which so remarkably characterised the Athenians, we shall find, as the result of every examination, that our own constitutions do not contain within themselves the seeds of evil, which wrought the ruin of the ancient States. With us, government is the protector of personal industry, talent, and happiness; and we are firmly persuaded, that however luxury may, with the increase of wealth, diffuse itself among private individuals, frugality is the true policy of the State. A portion of a people, whether it be an aristocracy, as in Venice or in England, or a separate multitude, like the rulers of Attica, may, and probably will become corrupt and unjust; a great nation, which acknowledges no political distinctions, can never be blind to the principles of equity. Justice is there the evident and permanent interest of all. With us, the great body of the citizens is sure of remaining uncontaminated; we have far more to apprehend from the headlong ambition or downright corruption of those, who are the depositories of power.

ART. IV.—*Character and Abuses of the Medical Profession.*
Rules and Regulations of the Boston Medical Association.

The influence of the several professions upon the character, moral, as well as intellectual and physical, of their members, would furnish us with a subject of inquiry not a little curious and interesting. There may be much exaggeration in the proverbial characteristics of each profession; but there can hardly fail to be some foundation for impressions so general, either in the past history, or the present condition of each community. The progress of society may have softened down the distinctions of those who have shared its improvements, or the character of individuals may have outstripped that of the particular community to which they belong; nevertheless, we apprehend it will still in general hold true, that the lawyer will acquire some peculiar habits by arguing for the fame or the rewards of victory, the clergyman by arguing where he does not expect, and cannot receive an answer, and the physician, by being accustomed to *prescribe* without either arguing, or being argued with, at all. In the other departments of life, too, the peculiar customs and habits of each exert a permanent influence upon the character of the individuals who compose it.